

Message Text

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TAGS: EFIN, EINV, BAGB, TS

SUBJ: AGRIBUSINESS

REF : STATE 3722

1. EMBASSY RECEIVED LETTER JAN 20 FROM EZZEDDINE CHELBI ON BEHALF OF MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE HASSAN BELKHOJA APPROVING TEXT FORWARDED REFTEL WITH MINOR MODIFICATIONS. TEXT AS APPROVED FOR PUBLICATION IN "TOPICS" NOW READS AS FOLLOWS: BEGIN TEXT.

IN A RECENT MEETING IN TUNISIA, EZZEDDINE CHELBI, CHEF DU CABINET OF THE TUNISIAN MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, REITERATED HIS GOVERNMENT'S POLICY TO DEVELOP AGRIBUSINESS IN TUNISIA. HE ALSO TOLD PHILIP MCCALLUM, OPIC'S DEPUTY VICE PRESIDENT FOR FINANCE, THAT U.S. FOOD PROCESSING AND MARKETING FIRMS ESTABLISHING VENTURES IN TUNISIA CAN BE ASSURED OF A SUPPLY OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS.

MR. CHELBI ASSURED MR. MCCALLUM THAT TUNISIAN GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, WHICH OWN EXTENSIVE AGRICULTURAL LAND, AS WELL AS PRIVATE TUNISIAN FARMERS, ARE PREPARED TO ENTER INTO DIRECT CONTRACTS TO PROVIDE THE QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF PRODUCT
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NEEDED FOR FOOD PROCESSING, PACKING OR MARKETING FIRMS

ESTABLISHED IN TUNISIA BY U.S. INVESTORS.

A U.S. FIRM CAN ESTABLISH A TUNISIAN COMPANY TO OPERATE A FOOD PROCESSING OR MARKETING CONCERN IN TUNISIA BY ITSELF--PARTICULARLY IF THE PRODUCT IS PRODUCED FOR EXPORT--OR IN JOINT VENTURE WITH A TUNISIAN PARTNER. THIS TUNISIAN OPERATING COMPANY, THROUGH ITS SUPPLY CONTRACT WITH GOVERNMENT OR PRIVATE FARMS, CAN ASSURE ADEQUATE SUPERVISION OVER AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION TO MEET ITS NEEDS. TUNISIA'S POLICY, HOWEVER, DOES NOT PERMIT THE PURCHASE OR LEASE OF AGRICULTURAL OR PASTORAL LAND BY FOREIGN-OWNED ENTITIES OR LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANIES.

MR. MCCALLUM SAID HE WAS PLEASED WITH THE RESULTS OF THE MEETING. "IT APPEARS THAT TUNISIA CONTAINS AN ABUNDANT SUPPLY OF ARABLE ACREAGE AND A VARIETY OF CLIMATIC AND SOIL CHARACTERISTICS CONDUCIVE TO EFFICIENT PRODUCTION. THIS, PLUS TUNISIA'S PROXIMITY TO MAJOR INTERNATIONAL MARKETS, MAKES IT AN ATTRACTIVE AREA FOR MANY NEW AGRIBUSINESS CO-VENTURE POSSIBILITIES." END TEXT.

2. WHEN PUBLISHED, EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE ABOUT 25 COPIES FOR DISTRIBUTION TO APPROPRIATE TUNISIAN OFFICIALS AND VISITING BUSINESSMEN.
SEELYE

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